

HANDS-ON ARTICLES

INSPIRING HISTORY LEARNERS: GETTING THE RECIPE RIGHT IN THE HISTORY CLASSROOM

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Abstract

History teachers work on techniques and methods to inspire learners. If the teacher gets the recipe right in the classroom, history learners will enjoy and apply themselves to the subject, their understanding of content will increase, and they will acquire the necessary skills to achieve results. A technique used to inspire learners beyond the confines of the covers of a textbook, will be shared. The technique includes inviting outside speakers to share their curriculum-relevant personal stories and experiences with learners in the classroom. It will be argued that the value of introducing other 'voices' into the history classroom to enrich teaching and learning is only effective if underpinned by an ethos which advocates active citizenship, reinforced by a passionate teacher with subject specific knowledge, in a classroom structured to facilitate critical conversation.

Keywords: Techniques and methods; History teaching; Curriculum; Outside speakers; Ethos, classroom layout; Subject-specific knowledge; History learners.

Get the context right first

If a teacher gets the “recipe right” in applying techniques and methods to inspire history learners, it will translate into learners applying themselves to the subject, understanding of content will increase, as will their grasp of the required skills the subject teaches. This will impact positively on assessment results. Buy-in for the subject will increase as the inspired students become the most influential marketing agent for the subject. This holds true especially with the teaching of History.

Weber (1982, as cited in Smith & Laslett, 2002:25) uses two useful concepts to analyse the milieu / environment within which relationships develop and in which learners are actively engaged in learning, namely “encouragement” and “momentum”. He defines “encouragement” as an affirmation of belief in the learner’s potential and capacity to do better, and which is demonstrated by the enthusiasm which permeates the teachers planning and presentation. It combines the ability to transmit a personal fascination with the subject being taught and a genuine enjoyment of the company of the learners to whom it is being taught. “Momentum” he defines as the learner’s realisation of an ability to cope and capacity to achieve in a subject, promoted by a teacher’s skill in ensuring that all learners have sufficient experience of success to generate self-motivation.

The application of these two concepts is what defines an effective teacher, effective classroom management, and results in an effective classroom milieu. It is not a single attribute which a teacher either has or does not have, but is a product of a combination of skills, knowledge and understanding (Smith & Laslett, 2002:iii). The most important aspects in creating a good classroom milieu/environment, where teaching and learning are enhanced, can be found embedded in the concepts of encouragement and momentum engendered by an effective history teacher.

Sharing personal stories, inviting outside speakers into the classroom

A technique used to inspire learners and their interest in history as a subject, is to invite outside speakers into the classroom to share their curriculum-relevant personal stories with the class. In some respects this technique exposes the learners to a form of “Oral History”. It does not matter that the individual teacher may evidence all the highly effective “traits” of a teacher (McEwan, 2002), the learners in the class still love nothing better than to hear a different voice.

However, introducing other voices into the history classroom to enrich teaching and learning, is only effective if underpinned by an ethos which advocates active citizenship, reinforced by a passionate teacher with subject specific knowledge, in a classroom structured to facilitate critical conversation.

Active agency is informed by an ethos

A history teacher is not an island unto him/herself, but should be an agent of influence and change to enhance teaching and learning. This active agency is informed by an ethos. The ethos, for South African history teachers, is underpinned by the constitutional imperative to affirm the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, and to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights (Chapter Two, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108, 1996). Emerging from this constitutional imperative, and part of the ethos, is subject specific policy and pedagogic imperatives. With respect to History as a subject, the continuing work reflected in the *Manifesto On Values, Education and Democracy* (2001:4) argues that “putting History back into the curriculum is a means of nurturing critical inquiry and forming an historical consciousness”, stressing that promoting a strong study of the past is a particular educational imperative in a country like South Africa, which is itself consciously remaking its current history (Brookbanks, 2013). The *Manifesto On Values, Education and Democracy*, which serves to underpin education reform in South Africa post 1994, concludes that, when taught by imaginative teachers, the richness of History has a bigger capacity than any other discipline, to promote reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind, because it encourages a knowledge of the other, the unknown and the different. It is History in this modern sense that Williams (1976, as cited in Brookbanks, 2013) had in mind when he emphasised that, in different hands, it teaches or shows one most kinds of knowable past and almost every kind of imaginable future.

At a macro level, legislative, policy and pedagogic imperatives underpin the ethos of a teacher in a classroom. They are further defined at a micro level, by the Mission Statement and Motto of individual schools. By illustration, the mission statement of the school at which the writer is employed, states *inter alia*: “Our mission is to be a South African public co-educational high school providing education ... contributing to the ongoing development of our country”. The Mission Statement claims further:

We are committed to ... An atmosphere where each members from such diverse backgrounds feels equally part of the school ... A multi-cultural community characterized by mutual respect, inclusivity and tolerance ... providing equal opportunities for boys and girls.

It commits to an education which:

Recognises and develops the unique potential of each individual to the fullest, encourages an open, analytical and questioning approach to life ... Engenders a balance between rights and responsibilities ... and, provides for the fullest possible all-round, balanced development of each learner.

The *motto* of the school is Nil Nisis Optimum, which means “Nothing but the best” (Westerford, 2014).

The conscious and practical implementation of this ethos, by a history teacher, will impact on all aspects of inter-personal engagement between teacher and learners. Jansen (as cited in Heystek, 2008:66) argues “schools have a culture – it is a collection of attitudes, values and (therefore) behaviour (of teachers and learners) that define and distinguish productive schools (and therefore classroom environments)”. According to Brown and Desmond (as cited in Heystek, 2008:66), this collection of attitudes, values and behaviour which often operate unconsciously, fashion an organisation’s view of itself, and its environment. It is the underpinning ethos. Manipulating the argument by Heystek (2008:90), learners in action during the process of learning should increasingly be conscious of values, principles and moral purpose in the classroom and should operate as an orchestra playing harmoniously to the tune of the conductor, the teacher. The musical score, through which the conductor guides the individual and collective instrumentalists, is the ethos.

Passion, enthusiasm and subject-specific knowledge of the history teacher

An aspect of creating a good classroom milieu/environment “within which relationships develop” (Smith & Laslett, 2002:14), is the subject-specific knowledge and passion for the subject exhibited by the teacher. Weber (1982), in defining the concept “encouragement”, refers to the enthusiasm which permeates the teacher’s planning and presentation. It combines the ability to transmit a personal fascination with the subject being taught. Infused with a definable ethos, the cement which binds together all aspects of a good classroom environment is the enthusiasm for the subject being engaged with. The enthusiasm the teacher brings into the classroom supports learning and shows both knowledge and passion. This falls within the distinct category of “intellectual traits that demonstrate knowledge, curiosity and reflection” for effective teachers, identified by McEwan (2002:3).

It is a travesty, for a multiplicity of reasons which are not the subject of this

analysis, that many teachers do not evidence subject-related knowledge or a passion for the subject they teach. Some teachers may have subject-related knowledge, but do not have the ability to impart such knowledge. Coe *et al.* (2014:2), in their recent study of what makes great teaching, argue there is strong evidence that where effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, this has an impact on learner outcomes. In the case of a History classroom, the deep subject-related knowledge should be underpinned with passion for the subject. It is an unfortunate reality, in both the formal schooling environment and at tertiary institutions, that some employed to teach have great intellectual capacity and subject knowledge, but little ability to impart such evident knowledge in either an understandable or inspiring manner. There are also examples of teachers who are passionate about their subject, but are not adequately knowledgeable in the subject they teach.

To maintain a classroom environment that supports learning, subject-specific knowledge and passion for the subject have to be shown by the teacher. Referring back to Weber's (1982) concept of "encouragement", how does this concept permeate the teacher's planning and presentation and combine the ability of the teacher to transmit a personal fascination with the subject, unless the teacher has both a subject-specific knowledge "and" passion for the subject? It is the combination of the two, knowledge and passion, which enables a teacher to inspire learners so that valuable learning takes place within the classroom environment. This is alluded to by Badenhorst (1987:94) when he argues that a teacher must stimulate the (learners) and inspire the (learners) in a creative way. Ryan (cited in Badenhorst, 1987) identifies qualities which characterise effective teachers such as their being stimulating and creative, as against dull and monotonous. This resonates with personal traits referred to by McEwan (2002) that signify characteristics of effective teachers.

The output of the classroom milieu/environment is learning, which is an experience which goes far beyond the confines of either a textbook or the explicit content of the curriculum. It is the teacher's knowledge and passion for the subject which facilitates the engagement with learning as well as ability to communicate with, or "get" learners. This is supported by Badenhorst (1987:94) when he argues that for a teacher to lead and accompany learners on an intellectual journey, the teacher will "have to master extensive knowledge of the ... subject that he teaches". This acquisition of knowledge is not a once-off development, but an ongoing process of active learning by the teacher. In this context, a culture of mediocrity should not be accepted in a school where

excellence and quality in education are the vision (Heystek, *et al.*, 2008:59). Heystek further argues that teachers, with subject knowledge and passion, need to strive to be great, rather than good, to be at the cutting edge of service delivery in teaching and learning in an effective classroom environment.

Classroom layout

A further aspect of creating a good classroom milieu/environment “within which relationships develop” (Smith & Laslett, 2002:14) is the classroom layout and the walls which contain it. The “cocoon” within which learning takes place differs from primary to high schools. The subject of this analysis is a high school, more specifically a History classroom in a high school, in which the size of each class averages 34 students.

Good and Brophy (as cited in Smith & Laslett, 2002:21) argue that in a traditionally laid out classroom for whole class teaching, in which desks are in rows, the teacher’s attention tends to focus on a limited “action zone” in the front and middle rows. This, they further argue, limits the visibility of learners outside the central area, where the quiet and reserved child fades into anonymity. The traditional layout of desks in rows is not conducive to active and engaged learning in a History classroom, in which learners are encouraged to express their opinions, hear and interact with ideas and understandings expressed by their peers, and engage with information provided in many different forms by the teacher. Desks in rows results in voices being silenced, due to the consequence of addressing the backs of others heads.

Waterhouse (as cited in Smith & Laslett, 2002:23) refers to the layout of desks in a U-shape, as a “peripheral system”. The learners’ desks or tables are placed around three edges of the classroom. This serves to ensure that, in most cases, learners are able to look their peers in the eye when listening and engaging in discussion. This is however, for practical reasons, not an absolute. In a class with 34 learners, adopting the “peripheral system” of desks in a U-shape results in two rows of desks along each side wall of the classroom, and three shorter rows at the back. The teacher then teaches from within the U, being able to constantly scan the entire class, facilitate interaction between learners, and, when necessary, direct the attention of the learners to the front of the class, when either information on the chalkboard and/or whiteboard is being engaged with. The U-shaped peripheral system opens towards the front of the classroom, enabling the teacher to constantly move from within the

U-shape, where facilitating of interaction and learning takes place, to the front of the class where a lecturing mode of teaching takes place. Without having to adapt the classroom layout of desks, the “peripheral system” enables a smooth transition between whole class lectures, small group tasks, individual study, and intra class engagement within any one lesson. All of this is facilitated by the active teacher.

The “cocoon” is not limited to the layout of desks in the classroom, but includes the containing walls of the classroom. What is placed on the walls should enhance and stimulate the learning and teaching taking place, by contributing to the conversation in the classroom as visual cues. In the case of a History classroom in a high school, the visual cues can include maps, political cartoons, and curriculum-relevant propaganda posters or storyboards, all of which can be regularly updated. At any particular time during the lesson, the teacher can draw the learners’ attention to a visual cue on the wall to illustrate a particular point relevant to the lesson. Therefore, by adopting the “peripheral system” for the layout of desks, the teacher is able to move from within the U-shape to the front of the classroom during a lesson, and also direct the learners’ attention to surrounding cues all of which serve to create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning.

Outside speakers

When a classroom is underpinned by an ethos which advocates active citizenship, is reinforced by a teacher with subject specific knowledge in a classroom structured to facilitate critical conversation, other voices can be introduced to enrich teaching and learning.

The approach adopted to identify outside speakers whose personal story will help to unpack aspects of the curriculum, takes different forms on the part of the organising teacher.

When a political commentator addressing an issue which shows an in-depth understanding of a curriculum-relevant issue is read in a newspaper, invite the political commentator to come and share their insights with the class. The political commentator could be an academic, a journalist or a political cartoonist.

In the case of political cartoonists, Cape Town is host to a number of renown political cartoonists whose work appear regularly in both daily and

weekly newspapers. Some of whom are, or were parents of learners at our school which makes them an invaluable resource to draw on. What this does illustrate is that the teacher must know their own parent body so they are able to draw on the accessible resource. In the study of history, political cartoons are regularly used as primary sources. Learners learn the background context which they then use to enable them to interpret the intended message of the political cartoonist. Overtime, particularly in relation to South African history, it is possible to develop a “library” of iconic political cartoons which appeared in newspapers addressing issues and incidents in the 1980s, early 1990s (the period of negotiations in South Africa), and the period after our first democratic elections in 1994 – all of which are thematic areas of focus in the Grade 12 South African history syllabus.

A few of these political cartoons can be enlarged as posters, which should be on the wall of the classroom. As the class works through the relevant section of work, draw the class’s attention to the related political cartoon as a teaching aid, and engage with them as to how to unpack the visual metaphor of the cartoon. Having an actual political cartoonist then come into the classroom to share their “craft” with the class, enables the learners to develop a deeper understanding as to how and why the political cartoonist constructs the visual metaphor using caricatures, irony, and satire to communicate his/her opinion in relation to an incident or issue. Learners are taught how to interpret political cartoons, but the experience of hearing and seeing a political cartoonist in action develops a far deeper appreciation and ability to interpret primary sources.

A further resource to draw on, are people living in our own country, some of whom are refugees, who have been victims and survivors of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, or genocide. Having a victim and survivor of such traumatic experiences visit the classroom, does require of the teacher having done preparatory work with the learners before the visit. The learners must have studied the relevant section of work so they have a level of appreciation of what the “outside speaker” will be referring to when sharing their personal story.

An example could be in preparation for a visit by a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide (1994), the class need to have a background to events which led up to the Rwandan Genocide and the course and consequences of the genocide itself. Probably more importantly, the onus is on the teacher to prepare the learners about the necessity for sensitivity and empathy in engaging, face-

to-face, with a survivor of such traumatic experiences. It cannot be expected of them to necessarily have the insight and level of emotional maturity to engage with such a survivor, despite learners having been taught the “lessons for humanity” we derive from studying both Holocaust History and the Rwandan Genocide.

In most instances, the survivor, as a refugee, will have what to the learners’ ear is a strange accent in that they are not necessarily English speaking. Learners need to be prepared for this to ensure they respond sensitively, appreciatively and appropriately. Accessing of survivors, and approaching them to assist in the teaching and learning within the classroom can be done through different forums. The teacher can make an initial request through United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office or Refugee Centers. We are privileged to have the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC) in close proximity, and so we network with their office to organise hosting visiting survivors at our school when they are invited to Cape Town by the CTHC.

An immediately accessible source is the schools own parent body. We have many parents, as with most schools in South Africa, who are themselves victims and survivors of Apartheid’s race-based policies. They are able to talk to the experience for their families of being forcibly removed from their homes as residential areas were declared “White only”. They share their trauma, confusion and shame as young children being unable to enter facilities declared “White only” or being spoken to in a derogatory and racist manner. They share their experience of being young adults who developed a political consciousness and activism in various anti-apartheid formations, both extra-parliamentary and underground during the 1980s and early 1990s. Hearing these voices is a privilege in that some parents have not shared the experience of their past with their own children, let alone a classroom of learners. We have parents who themselves were part of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and are able to speak as primary sources to the process involved, which is part of both our Grade 9 and Grade 12 history syllabus. All of which serves to enrich the learners understanding of curriculum-relevant issues and events.

Inviting these outside speakers is particularly useful in preparing Grade 9 students to undertake research for their “Oral History” assignment.

In the 20 years which have followed South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994, a number of people who were intimately involved in various parts of the struggle against and for Apartheid, particularly those who were part of

the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s, the “underground” of the African National Congress (ANC) in exile (banned in 1960), South African Communist Party (SACP, banned in 1950), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC, banned in 1960), or Apartheid state functionaries have begun to document their personal memoirs. Some have featured in full feature movies or documentaries. When such memoirs, movies or documentaries are released, the author involved or subjects who feature serve as very insightful primary sources to engage with learners in the classroom.

Examples of some of these outside speakers invited to share their stories in the classroom are the following.

Having completed the teaching of the late 1960s and ‘70s South African history of the Black Consciousness Movement leading up to the Soweto Uprising of 1976 in terms of content, and having engaged with various primary and secondary sources, Dr Mamphela Ramphele was invited to share her story of the period of history with our learners. She began her story by immersing the learners in the nature of segregated Apartheid South Africa by explaining she arrived as a “politically naive” person at University in 1967, as the only “token black on a permit” allowed to study at the University. She then took the learners on her personal journey of developing a political consciousness and organisational involvement, as one of the 15 founding members of both the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and what became known in 1972 as the Black People’s Convention (BPC). She discussed the various forms of Black Consciousness (BC)-inspired organisations which unfolded, increasing state repression, and events associated with the Soweto Uprising (1976), culminating in thousands of students going into exile (referred to as the Soweto Generation), the banning of BC individuals and organisations, and the detention and murder of Steve Biko in 1977.

During the question and answer session which followed her talk, the learners were interested to hear her take on the character who portrayed her in the movie depiction of *Cry Freedom*, and which they all knew from the full feature movie adaptation of Donald Woods’ book. She was also able to explain the historical context of the need, at the time, for Black Consciousness to the learners. When asked whether she still supports Black Consciousness, she said that today, she has and believes in a South African Consciousness.

When studying South African history of the 1980s different role-players who articulate distinctly different perspectives have been invited to share their experience and stories with our learners. We have had Barry Gilder share his

experience of being in exile. Gilder left South Africa in the mid-1970s, and initially got involved with the anti-Apartheid Movement in the Netherlands before joining the ANC which sent him to Angola and the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) for training as an armed combatant of their military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (meaning “Spear of the Nation”). Gilder’s discussion with the students included an explanation of his being deployed by the ANC to Gaborone, Botswana where he was targeted for attack by the South African security forces in the 1980s. He was also in a position to share some of his experiences of returning to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, and his involvement in the process of arriving at a negotiated settlement for South Africa between 1990 and 1994.

Another “voice” which our learners have heard from the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* underground, who was recruited and operated within South Africa as distinct from being in exile, has been that of Jeremy Vearey. Vearey shared his story of developing a class consciousness through the influence of his parents who were trade unionists, qualifying as a teacher in the early 1980s when he got involved in local community anti-apartheid structures and activities in working class communities of the Cape Peninsula, and being recruited into the ANC’s underground through which he got involved in a cell which undertook acts of sabotage. Vearey shared his experience of being arrested in 1987, interrogated and tortured, convicted of sabotage and sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island. He was in a position to explain to the learners how his political education developed on Robben Island.

After Vearey’s release from Robben Island after the unbanning of the ANC, his involvement with the ANC’s Department of Intelligence and Security (DIS) during the period of negotiations in South Africa from 1990 to 1994 was explained to the learners. His experience during this period gave great insight into some of the massacres which took place in South Africa during the negotiation period and which had the potential to derail attempts to reach a settlement. He elaborated on the Boipatong and Bisho Massacres, the violent conflict in Kwa-Zulu Natal, as well as his interpretation of a “Third Force” which attempted to further ignite violent confrontation.

A further “voice” shared with our learners was that of Anthony Turton. Turton was able to share and explain his involvement with the Chief Directorate Covert Operations of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) in the 1980s by providing insight into amongst other activities, his covert involvement with RENAMO (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*) in Mozambique as well

as his experience of monitoring developments in Soviet Satellite countries during the revolutions of 1989.

To develop the learners understanding of attempts to subvert the process of negotiation between 1990 and 1994, as well as the extent of violence in the country at the time, we have also invited a member of a non-governmental organisation involved in conflict resolution in the Western Cape Province at the time, Stef Snel, to share his insights with the learners. Snel was able to share his understanding of sites of violence which existed, the role of the “Peace Committees” which developed in an attempt to defuse tensions, and his involvement in binding state security and ANC DIS personnel into a process of engagement to resolve the sites of violence.

Another person invited to share his insights into the 1993 acts of sabotage undertaken by a unit of the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA) in Cape Town, which took place at both St James Church in Kenilworth and the Heidelberg Tavern in Observatory, was one of the investigators into both incidents, Schalk Visagie. Visage was a member of the former Security Branch of the South African Police (SAP) and, in 1993, a member of the task team which investigated violent incidents such as the APLA attacks.

A further aspect of the course content for our Grade 12 learners of South African history in the 1980s, is related to the informal and secret negotiations which were facilitated through business interests in London, between a delegation from the ANC in exile (led by former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki) and a Stellenbosch University academic, who represented the Apartheid state. The academic, Dr Willie Esterhuyse, was “guided” in the negotiation process by the Director General of the very secretive National Intelligence Service, Dr Neil Barnard. This initiative unfolded at the same time as secret negotiations were unfolding between the then still imprisoned Nelson Mandela and both South Africa’s then Minister of Justice, Cobie Coetzee, and Dr Neil Barnard. To assist the learners in appreciating the extent of mistrust which existed in the second half of the 1980s, between key protagonists to South Africa’s crisis at the time, and resultant subterfuge involved in the “secret negotiations” which took place, we have shown our Grade 12 classes the full feature movie *Endgame*, based on the similarly tilted book written by Esterhuyse.

To develop a deeper sense of the issues at stake, we wanted our learners to engage in conversation directly with either Thabo Mbeki or Dr Neil Barnard. To date we have not been successful in getting Thabo Mbeki to visit our

classroom. In recent years when we get to that particular part of our curriculum, Mbeki has been out of South Africa due to his ongoing involvement in conflict mediation between Sudan and South Sudan. However, we did manage to host Dr Neil Barnard in what took the form of a question and answer session with our learners. It was an interesting engagement between Barnard, the *Spy Master*, and our learners. Not surprisingly in retrospect, after the conversation one of our more astute learners commented that he could remember all the questions posed to Barnard, but could not remember the answers provided!

Sensitive history teachers make the difference

It may seem obvious and not warranting of comment, that teachers should like learners. Why, otherwise, would they choose a profession which results in their spending the greater proportion of their working day with learners? Not only do they spend hours each day in the classroom environment, but they also spend hours extramurally with learners on sports fields in the afternoons, in halls with music ensembles, or on the stage with play rehearsals, to name but a few forms of interaction between teachers and learners. Through this engagement relationships are also developed. In discussing *four rules* of classroom management, Smith and Laslett (2002:10) prioritise rule four as “Get on with them”. In the context of a classroom environment, they argue that teachers develop good relationships with their learners by fostering mutual trust and respect and suggest that teachers need to be aware of each child as an individual and be sensitive to the mood of the class as a whole.

Liking the learners and experiencing a genuine enjoyment of the company of the learners being taught, is more than merely “Get(ting) on with them”. Where a history teacher likes the learners and enjoys the company of the learners, and where the teacher’s subject-specific knowledge and passion is evident, and an effective classroom layout and resourced walls are all synthesised, mutual trust and respect will evolve. In no sense is it suggested that the relationship between teacher and learner should be that of a “friend”. However, where a teacher does like the learners, and does experience a genuine enjoyment of the company of the learners being taught, the relationship which develops is friendly. This is an aspect of the concept “encouragement”, as suggested by Weber (1982, cited in Smith & Laslett, 2002), which is necessary in creating a good classroom environment, where teaching and learning is enhanced.

The sad reality is that a number of teachers do not like all learners. While

they may get on with them, showing appropriate respect for learners and being quite capable of creating a classroom environment within which teaching and learning does take place, this does not translate into “liking learners” and “enjoying the company of the learners”. It becomes apparent when a deviation from the rules is met with disproportionate punishment in terms of inane writing out and detention, and where the extent of the sanction, which is retributive in purpose, proves a teacher’s need to exert authority and gain control, as opposed to having the purpose of “consequences” leading to learning. In this context, such teachers need to be reminded that the meaning of discipline is found in the word disciple. A disciple is a person who follows a teacher or guide, not through coercion, and therefore discipline cannot be retributive in character. Furthermore, many teachers can be heard looking forward to a free period, a break, or the end of the week, while very few are heard expressing excitement about getting into the classroom. The teachers may be “get(ting) on with them” when they enter the classroom, but they most definitely do not enjoy the company of learners. It is important for teachers to know that learners can, and do, discern the difference between the two.

Getting the recipe right

The two concepts which define an effective teacher as suggest by Weber (1982), “encouragement” and “momentum” are applied if the teacher gets the recipe right. The recipe in a History classroom includes introducing other “voices” to enrich teaching and learning, in a milieu underpinned by an ethos which advocates active citizenship, reinforced by a passionate teacher with subject specific knowledge, and where the classroom is structured to facilitate critical conversation.

It is imaginative teachers which make the difference, such that learners enjoy and apply themselves to the subject, and both their understanding of content and acquisition of required skills is increased immeasurably. We as History teachers should be constantly reminded that ultimately, as suggested by Coe *et al.* (2014:2), learner progress is the yardstick by which teacher quality should be assessed.

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